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A

NARRATIVE

OF

CIRCUMSTANCES

ATTENDING

MR. BERESFORD'S

MARRIAGE WITH

MISS HAMILTON.

MAGNA VERITAS, ET PRÆVALEBIT.

L O N D O N :

Printed in the Year 1782.



Advertisement.

EVERY circumstance advanced in the following sheets is supported by legal evidence, taken both in England and in France. The original affidavits, *proces-verbals*, &c. are in the hands of Mr. Beresford's Solicitor in London.

THE HISTORY

OF THE
CITY OF
NEW-YORK
FROM
THE
FIRST
SETTLEMENT
TO
THE
PRESENT
TIME

A

NARRATIVE, &c.

MR. Beresford was introduced into the family of Mrs. Hamilton at her villa near London in the Summer of 1780. He soon became a welcome and a frequent guest, for Mrs. Hamilton was pleased to give particular encouragement to his visits, with a view, as it has since appeared, of subjecting his heart to the charms of Miss Dawson, a handsome young lady, whom she had taken into her house as a companion for her daughter.

The first sensation which Miss Hamilton excited in the breast of Mr. Beresford was that of pity and concern. He observed this young Lady, whose consequence and fortune were the frequent topic of her mother's conversation, treated and situated in a manner very different from these high pretensions. The culture of her mind was totally neglected, and

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the style of her dress beneath that of an upper servant. He perceived, through all the disadvantages of this disguise, a native good taste, an understanding capable of every improvement, and a person wanting only the common assistance of dress to appear engaging and elegant. He often observed with great pain, that Mrs. Hamilton seemed to enjoy a malevolent satisfaction in taking occasion to mortify her daughter, by a contemptuous mode of opposing her opinions and sentiments ; and Miss Hamilton appeared to feel acutely this unkind maternal triumph.

Miss Dawson, who experienced a tenderness which this unhappy and neglected daughter never shared, became intoxicated with this distinction, and Miss Hamilton too often felt the evil effects of it, in a conduct towards her very unbecoming a person in the dependant state of a companion.

These feelings, which the situation of Miss Hamilton excited, by a natural progress, ripened into love ; and having, on many happy occasions, discovered her sentiments in his favour, Mr. Beresford frankly offered her his hand. Opportunities were not wanting to favour his wishes, and many happy weeks passed away in an intercourse now painful to recollect.

At length Miss Hamilton herself suggested and contrived the means of her escape, and the lovers only waited a favourable opportunity to effect it. This resolution was the result of deliberation on the part of the young lady, who knew that Mr. Beresford, through a generous indiscretion to serve a friend, was somewhat embarrassed in his affairs, and that the step she was about to take would forever destroy all hopes of fortune from Mrs. Hamilton. They were therefore determined to be happy with Mr. Beresford's present preferment, joined to the few thousand pounds Miss Hamilton was in her own right entitled to, and to look for more affluent circumstances in the future advantages of the patronage, with which for several years Mr. Beresford had been honoured by one of the first families in the kingdom.

The evening of the first of November was appointed for their journey to Scotland; which step, however it may be censured by the prudent and severe, and may in itself be highly blameable, yet necessity in this instance affords it a considerable extenuation; for they knew Mrs. Hamilton too well, to hope to be happy by any other means.

Miss Hamilton, after going to bed at her usual hour, accompanied by two other La-

dies who slept together in the same room, got up when she supposed they were asleep, and secreted herself in a dark closet in a remote part of the house, where she put on her clothes. She was obliged to avail herself of this expedient, as Mrs. Hamilton, apprehensive that her ill-treatment of her daughter might one day induce her to elope, had taken care that there should be no access to Miss Hamilton's chamber but through her own, and when this lady went to bed, which was generally many hours after the young ladies, it was her custom to lock the door. Mrs. Hamilton at length retired, and Miss Hamilton escaped from the closet; and accompanied by her Mother's maid, whom she had engaged in this enterprize, repaired to Mr. Beresford to a neighbouring inn, where he had been anxiously waiting to receive her. They set off for Scotland at two in the morning, and on the next day were married at Greatna-green.

On their return to London, they found, as they naturally expected, that Mrs. Hamilton shewed the strongest marks of resentment and displeasure; nor could the dutiful intreaty for permission to implore her forgiveness, conveyed to Mrs. Hamilton in a letter from her Daughter in the way from Scotland, procure the reception of her and her Husband.

Happy

Happy in each other, they were the less sensible of this disappointment, and they looked forwards with hope that Mrs. Hamilton would, ere long, relent and forgive them.

Mrs. Hamilton had presented a petition to the Court of Chancery, couched in very unfair terms, and supported by circumstances most grossly misrepresented. The Lord Chancellor, misled by the tenour of the petition, expressed himself with great severity on the occasion. But Mr. Beresford was then happy in the possession of one whose approbation and affection placed him beyond the dread of any censure the Court could inflict; and influenced too by motives of delicacy and honour, he objected to answer and invalidate these injurious particulars, as it must have been at the expence of exposing a family with whom he now became intimately connected.

The happy couple resided at the house of a very respectable friend in the City, in order to be re-married, for the satisfaction of Mrs. Beresford; and after banns being duly published, their union was effectually cemented on the 11th of December, in the Church of St. Catherine Cree, in Leadenhall Street.

Mr. Beresford then brought his Wife to his apartments near Portland Place, which he had newly fitted up for her reception.

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They had now only one wish to gratify, which was to obtain Mrs. Hamilton's forgiveness; and Mrs. Beresford again wrote to her in the most dutiful terms, stating, that a Mother's pardon was only wanting to make her completely happy, and most earnestly intreated permission to be admitted to her presence. She received an answer of a very singular nature, couched in a kind of prosaic blank verse, a studied play upon words taken from a passage in Othello, without expressing any meaning at all. However, at the pressing instance of her Husband, Mrs. Beresford was prevailed upon to venture into her Mother's presence; and a lady had the goodness to accompany her to Marlborough-street, and with great difficulty got access to Mrs. Hamilton's chamber.

The particulars of this intercourse will be passed over in silence, as they exhibit nothing in favour of Mrs. Hamilton's mode of receiving her daughter, or of the politeness of her manners towards the lady who attended her.

So careless is the mind in the possession of happiness to provide for its continuance, and so short is the foresight of Man, that Mr. Beresford now fondly anticipated all his hopes, and trusting in the confidence which he placed in his Wife, he could not suspect he was laying
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the foundation of his present misfortunes, by exposing her to the arts of a revengeful and implacable parent.

Whatever were the methods of which Mrs. Hamilton availed herself to work the change in her daughter's affections, Mr. Beresford discovered their evil effects a few days after the first visit she paid to her. These early effects, which broke in materially on his happiness, naturally suggested the necessity of putting a stop to her visits; but his unwillingness to oppose whatever she could wish, and his anxious desire to make her happy, too easily induced him to wave these considerations; and to this want of resolution is owing his present unhappy situation.

On the tenth of January Mrs. Beresford went to her Mother's house as usual, and Mr. Beresford conducted her to the door, for he was never permitted to come into the house. At ten in the evening he sent a carriage for her, when two men from an upper-story window, one of whom was a fellow from the office of a trading Justice, informed the Coachman that his Lady had been gone from thence three hours, and that Mrs. Hamilton too was gone out of town. This was all the information he was able to obtain.

Mrs.

Mrs. Hamilton returned two days after, but inhumanly denied Mr. Beresford access to her, or to give any account of her daughter.

Mr. Beresford was inconsolable for the rash step his wife had taken. He, indeed, considered her as the victim of maternal seduction, yet his apprehensions were increased by the example her mother had afforded her of living in a state of separation from Mr. Hamilton. Mrs. Beresford could hardly remember the time when her parents lived together.

Mr. Beresford, after having, in vain, solicited Mrs. Hamilton to discover to him the retreat of her daughter, found it necessary to appeal to the laws of his country for that justice which Mrs. Hamilton resolutely denied to his solicitations. His counsel moved the Court of King's Bench for a writ of Habeas Corpus, which was immediately granted; to which Mrs. Hamilton gave an evasive answer, which served her purpose for the moment. But, conscious that her conduct in the false answer she had given exposed her to the severest reprehensions of the Court; and as neither her pretensions to rank, nor her actual possession of money, could shelter her from the penalty of imprisonment, which she had incurred, she had prudence enough to quit the kingdom on the day Mr. Beresford was to move for a new writ against her.

It

It would be a tedious, as well as ungrateful, task to mark all Mrs. Hamilton's deviations from rectitude during this unhappy business. But so degrading has it been, that the Reader would not only find his indignation excited by it, but his philanthropy impaired.

After many unavailing efforts to appease his mother-in-law's resentment, and many a fruitless search after his ungrateful wife, Mr. Beresford determined to divert the distraction of his mind by travelling in a foreign country.

He tried the expedient, and found it ineffectual; when returning to England through Lisle, he discovered, by accident, that Mrs. Beresford had been concealed in a convent there till the late arrival of Mrs. Hamilton, with whom she had since resided, and that she was seven months advanced in her pregnancy.

Mr. Beresford immediately applied to the magistrates, who deputed two of their body to hear and report the young Lady's reasons for having in so extraordinary a manner, and in so critical a situation, abandoned a fond and affectionate husband.

Mrs. Beresford never appeared to greater disadvantage. Her youth, in spite of her mother's instructions, disqualified her for acting a base and infamous part, without evident marks of shame and confusion. On her examination,

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(at which her mother was not present) she had nothing to alledge against her husband but his humour * and want of fortune. She acknowledged she had loved him, and that she loved him still, yet refused to return to him without an order from the Judges.

The impatient husband was now introduced. His agony of mind betrayed him into no bitterness of expression, nor transported him beyond the bounds of tender expostulation.

It will hardly be credited, that the young Lady seemed the person the least affected of all the company, who, young and old, paid that tribute to sensibility which the peculiarity of the distress before them so forcibly excited.

The magistrates returned to the *Hotel de Ville*, and made their report, and in four days judgment was to be pronounced.

In the mean while Mrs. Hamilton prevailed on her unhappy daughter to deny all that she had so solemnly avowed; and she presented a petition to the magistrates, containing the recantation. The court considered this infamous step in its proper light, and rejected the petition with contempt.

The only question now was, to provide for the safety of the child, of which Mrs. Beresford

* Altercations which arose from Mrs. Beresford's petulant conduct subsequent to her visits to her mother.

was pregnant, and to allow Mr. Beresford an opportunity of substantiating his claims as her husband, which, in the recantation, Mrs. Hamilton had induced her daughter to deny; though in the *proces-verbal* of the preceding day she had acknowledged and subscribed herself the wife of Mr. Beresford.

After much contention at Lille and (on Mrs. Hamilton's appeal) before the Parliament of Douay, it was decreed by *an arret*, through a concession on the part of Mr. Beresford to oblige his wife, that she should remain at her mother's apartments till after her delivery; that her husband should be allowed to have her guarded night and day, by such officers of the Police as he judged proper; and that the child, when born, should be placed under his care and protection.

Mr. Beresford soon discovered that a most infamous and unnatural plot had been meditated against his unborn offspring, the execution of which his arrival in Flanders had happily prevented.

It had been Mrs. Hamilton's avowed design to conceal, as much as possible, the birth of the child, the better to favour her intention of marrying her daughter to some man of fashion on the continent; and she had prevailed on Mr. Goslin, a merchant at Lille, to write letters to several of his correspondents at London,

purporting, that Mrs. Beresford was not with child, nor in Flanders.

Mrs. Hamilton then treated with a poor country-woman, to whom she engaged to pay forty louis-d'ors, on condition that she should conceal and nurse the child for four years, without divulging the circumstances of its birth, or who were its parents. It was then doomed to the *Maison-de-pauvres*, an hospital which admits the children of vagabonds at four years old, and not before : and she had so far prevailed on her daughter to favour this horrid conspiracy as to engage her solemnly to promise never to see the child ; yet, at the same time, when this promise was extorted from her, Mrs. Beresford observed with tears, that though she was to be hindered from seeing her child, she could not be prevented from loving it.

The discovery of this plot was chiefly owing to the declarations of Mrs. Bumford, an Irish lady, residing at Lille, the confidante and coadjutor of Mrs. Hamilton, who, under the influence of Burgundy, is remarkably communicative of her friends secrets.

Nor was this the only injury meditated against the innocent infant, even before its birth. The execution of a murderer, condemned to be broken alive on the wheel, exposed it to be the victim of unnatural curiosity. In vain Mr, Beresford

Beresford intreated Mrs. Hamilton to keep her daughter in the back apartments the morning of this horrid spectacle; the scene of which was just under her window*. But let decency suppress the relation of what followed, and let it only be observed that the providence of God preserved the child from harm in this, as in all other perils to which its implacable grandmother has exposed it.

During these transactions, offers were made to Mr. Beresford, equally painful to his feelings and derogatory to his honour. Mrs. Hamilton proposed a collusive divorce ‡, by availing herself

* This story, which is notorious at Paris, is answered and justified in a manner too curious not to be mentioned, by some ladies of quality in that capital, who eat Mrs. Hamilton's soup and win her money. They gravely observe, that Mrs. Beresford was too far advanced in her pregnancy, to expose the child to any danger at the sight of an execution.

Mr. Beresford's urgent application to Mrs. Hamilton, on the above subject, might seem an unnecessary step, as female delicacy would have prevented his precautions. But every female has not delicacy. Mrs. Hamilton and her daughter were seen a few days before this execution, amusing themselves with the sight of a poor woman flogged naked under their window in a most cruel manner: this awakened Mr. Beresford's apprehensions, and occasioned his unavailing solicitations.

‡ Mrs. Hamilton has made the laws of divorce her principal study for some years past, in order to criminate her husband,

self of a Scotch law, where incontinency on the part of the husband is a sufficient ground for annulling a marriage. Mr. Beresford neither chusing to commit wilful adultery, or to part with his wife, refused the proposal with becoming indignation.

Notwithstanding this rebuke, Mrs. Hamilton, listening only to the suggestion of her revenge, renewed the shameful treaty in another form. She offered her daughter as the sacrifice, and that Mr. Beresford was to be himself the witness of his wife's dishonour, and sue for a divorce in England; and for either of these proposed collusions, he was to receive upwards of five thousand pounds.

band, with whom she has had a long suit pending in the Ecclesiastical Court of Ireland. She hoped to avail herself of this knowledge even before her artifices had destroyed the mutual happiness of Mr. and Mrs. Beresford; and she had actually suggested and communicated plans favourable to her designs. She wished to have ensnared Mr. Beresford into incontinency, by throwing lures in his way, and thereby obtain a divorce *à mensâ & thoro*. But her son-in-law's known attachment to his wife, shewing the impracticability of this plan, she was unguarded enough to declare to several of her acquaintance, that she would gladly give a thousand pounds to any person that would place himself in such a situation with her daughter as to give cause for, and provoke, Mr. Beresford to obtain a divorce *à vinculis matrimonii*.

However

However monstrous this may appear in the conduct of a woman, it is very consistent with Mrs. Hamilton's system of morality.

About a month before the birth of his child, Mr. Beresford went to Paris, to lay his case before eminent Counsel. His good fortune introduced him to the acquaintance and friendship of M. Elie de Beaumont, and M. Target, the ornament of the Parisian Bar; and to the zeal and ability of these Gentlemen he has been since indebted for the stand he has been able to make against a formidable persecution, supported by the interest of intriguing courtiers, and the wealth of an opulent adversary.

On the twenty-ninth of August Mrs. Beresford was delivered of a daughter; a *procès-verbal*, attested by several witnesses, shews how imperfectly, in that moment at least, she acted the part in which Mrs. Hamilton had so long instructed her. Her inquiries whom the child resembled; the pleasure she expressed on becoming a mother; the horror she conceived when Mrs. Hamilton refused a morsel of linen to wrap round the new born infant, and at seeing it carried away naked by a woman in her apron; the terrors excited by the indecent outrage of the same lady, who covered her face and muttered her curses as the child was carried by her, bespoke both the feelings of a Wife and a Mother.

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The same evening Mrs. Hamilton, who had already gained on the Curate of the parish, procured her grand-daughter to be baptized and registered as a bastard.

The desire to see a child whom she had never embraced, daily increased in the mind of Mrs. Beresford; and Mrs. Hamilton was obliged to promise her the gratification of her wishes, as soon as she was able to sit upright in bed. Seventeen days elapsed, during which time Mrs. Hamilton continued to amuse her daughter with promises, which, as she feared the force of Nature, she never meant to perform. In the mean while Mrs. Beresford, in the most private manner, sent frequent messengers to inquire after her child, earnestly conjuring them to conceal her inquiries from her mother, whose resentment she dreaded on the occasion. This maternal conflict, between the hope and disappointment of seeing her child, was soon ended. A *Lettre de Cachet*, on the eighteenth day of her delivery, scandalously interrupting the course of justice, removed Mrs. Beresford to Paris; and being exposed to the fatigue of a long and hasty journey at a time when she was scarce able to leave her chamber, she fell dangerously ill, nor did she wholly recover, before an alarming relapse had reduced her a second time in danger of her life.

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The obtaining from Monsieur Le Comte de Vergennes this *Lettre de Cachet* was the first successful effort of intrigue. And here it will be necessary to speak a word respecting the agents of it.

Whoever has been at Paris must have heard of Dr. Keary, an Irishman, a name as notorious as contemptible, branded with ignóminy since the publication of a well-written book, intituled *La Quinzaine Angloise*, in which the Doctor plays a very conspicuous part. Those who know his character, or have read this book, will readily acknowledge him to be a fit personage to second the views of Mrs. Hamilton.

Monsieur de Limon, a gentleman of brighter intellect, though not of purer morals, than the Doctor, next appears, and undertakes a part, which he has since continued with admirable effrontery.

This gentleman was bred to the law, and raised from obscurity to a charge of some importance in the household of Monsieur, the French King's brother. M. de Limon, however, incurred his Prince's displeasure, for practices notorious in Paris; and he was discarded in the most degrading manner. Few words comprize the subsequent part of his history; neither truth nor candour is violated in de-

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declaring him to have been, since his disgrace, nothing more than a genteel adventurer.

Dr. Keary had formerly cured this gentleman of a certain disorder, in a state which threatened his life, and refusing a fee, the patient held himself under an undischarged obligation to the Doctor, who was now about to afford him an opportunity of cancelling it.

Dr. Keary has long subsisted on the plunder of English Gentlemen at Paris, to whom he is the *arbiter elegantiarum*, and, at the same time, very opportunely, the surgeon; and he became closely connected with Mr. Hamilton Rowan, Mrs. Beresford's brother, when that gentleman figured away some years past in that capital. Mr. Rowan, who was with his mother at Lille during these late transactions, repaired, on his sister's delivery, to Paris. He sought his old friend the Doctor, and solicited his counsel and assistance. The Doctor introduced him to Mons. de Limon; and here the intrigue began.

M. de Limon was now no longer to labour under the burden of an uncanceled obligation. His services, in lieu of fees, were required to succour two illustrious strangers *, (for such Mrs. Hamilton was pleased to call herself and

* See likewise Mrs. Hamilton's *Memoire* to the Parliament of Douay, in which she files her daughter *l'illustre Informée*.

her daughter) who were persecuted by an impostor, who pretended to be the husband of Miss Hamilton.

This triumvirate was soon joined by Mrs. Hamilton, who, with Mrs. Beresford, arrived at Paris about the middle of September.

The cabal now became formidable, by the acquisition of some ladies of quality of damaged reputation, who were the dupes of Mrs. Hamilton's assumed nobility; for she had pretended to a near alliance and intimacy with the noble Scottish Duke of her husband's name; and she dressed her servants in his Grace's livery, the better to favour her pretended consanguinity*.

Elated with her newly acquired dignities, she suffered herself to be addressed with all the profusion of titles which the French so liberally bestow on English travellers. She then placed cities, and towns, and villages in her husband's manor in Ireland, which are only to be found in her description; and lastly, to complete the farce, she pretended to distant claims to the crown of Scotland.

* This imposture has been so far successful in Paris, that Madame la Marquise de Coalin, one of the haughtiest ladies of the court, whose ancestor intermarried in the family of the above-mentioned noble Duke, seriously observed to a lady of her acquaintance, *that she had the honour of being related to Mrs. Hamilton.*

The zeal and activity of M. de Limon began wonderfully to increase, as he was now impelled by higher motives than the mere discharging of a surgeon's bill. Mrs. Hamilton had promised him the hand of her daughter, with four hundred thousand livres, provided he could, by availing himself of the difference of the laws of the two kingdoms, procure a marriage, which she knew must ever legally subsist in England, declared null in France, and obtain, by the interest and intrigues of people of rank, to whom he was a parasite, the French King's protection against any effort which Mr. Beresford might hereafter make to interrupt this bigamical scheme. Devouring in idea the four hundred thousand livres, and elated with the prospect of possessing his promised bride, who, it must be observed, was totally ignorant of the honour intended her, M. de Limon was not able to contain his raptures. He declared his prospects to his friends, and the public soon heard, and spoke of it with indignation and horror.

Mrs. Hamilton about this time prevailed on her only son, Mr. Hamilton Rowan, to marry Miss Dawson, her daughter's companion, the young lady formerly destined for Mr. Beresford. It is not the business of this Narrative to relate the remarks which this very extraordinary event occasioned; which the world, however, did not con-

consider as the most respectable instance of Mrs. Hamilton's consistency, as it not a little overturned that lady's system of *mésalliance* and family pride.

Mr. Beresford had an audience with the Minister, on the subject of his wife's removal, and he was assured by him that she was in the Convent of the Assumption at Paris, agreeably to the tenour of the *Lettre de Cachet*, and that she should be secured there until the merits of his claims were judged by the Parliament of Douay.

Satisfied with these assurances, which M. de Vergennes gave him in his ministerial capacity, Mr. Beresford went to England, where his affairs called him, in the beginning of October. His absence afforded the cabal an opportunity of suggesting and perpetrating a scheme which will ever mark the conduct of the *Procureur General* of the Chatelet with ignorance and injustice. This Magistrate was so far gained by Mrs. Hamilton, as to admit her as INSTIGATRIX, PLAINTIFF, DENUNCIATRIX, and WITNESS. She indicted Mr. Beresford in this Court of Justice, for having eloped with her daughter in England, and in violation of the Law of Nations, she obtained a *Decret de prise de Corps* against him.

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While this scheme was in agitation, and after it had succeeded, Mrs. Hamilton urged Mr. Beresford, both in Paris and in London, to accept a former offer on her part of six thousand five hundred pounds, with security for any debts his wife might hereafter contract, provided he would desist from his pursuits, and permit Mrs. Beresford to live with her mother. Thus, by a strange inconsistency of conduct, did she acknowledge the validity of his pretensions on one hand, while, on the other, she denied it with all the solemnity of an oath, when she prosecuted him in the Chatelet, and represented him as an impostor.

Mr. Beresford returned to the Continent, to prosecute his suit before the Parliament of Douay, where, notwithstanding the removal of his wife to Paris, it still depended. At Lille, he was apprized of this very extraordinary *Decret* being in force against him. Conscious, however, of having neither violated the laws of his own, or of any other country, he repaired to Paris with his child, to face the impending danger. On his arrival he discovered that his wife had never been in the Convent of the Assumption, or in any other Convent in that Capital, but was with her mother at the Hotel de Vendome.

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His astonishment, however, was soon interrupted by new instances of violence. He was dragged in the most brutal manner by six legal ruffians from his bed, where he lay much indisposed, and was conveyed as a criminal to the Prison of the Chatelet.

The innocent child, deprived of its parent and protector, now became the object of Mrs. Hamilton's unsatiated vengeance. She endeavoured, by an application to the Chatelet, to take it from the nurse who suckled it, by whom she knew it was tenderly loved, and to place it in the hands of strangers, in a situation of which Mr. Beresford was to have been ignorant; but ere the cruel scheme could be executed, the protection of the Parliament frustrated the unnatural machination.

Mr. Beresford after being confined in the secret * of the prison, was, on the next day, examined before the *lieutenant criminel*. He was then conducted to a wretched apartment, the best the prison afforded, and his friends were permitted to see him.

He eagerly enquired after his child. They informed him she lay dangerously ill; the

* A criminal on his commitment is thrown into a sort of dungeon during twenty-four hours, called *le secret*, without, fire, candles, or pen, ink, or paper, or the permission to see his friends.

violence

violence of the preceding day having terrified the nurse to an extreme degree, the evil effects were communicated to the infant at her breast. The resolution and fortitude which had hitherto supported the unhappy father now forsook him, and he felt an agony for his child, which he had been above feeling for himself.

But none felt the distressful situation of Mr. Beresford more acutely than his excellent Counsel. They represented to the Parliament the necessity of immediately securing the person of Mrs. Hamilton, to answer for this daring outrage on the Law of Nations, and of placing a guard about Mrs. Beresford, in lieu of that appointed by the Parliament of Douay, from which she had been illegally emancipated by the *Lettre de Cachet*.

The Parliament hesitated not to comply with their request. An *arret* was the next day granted, which placed the child, who was now happily recovered, under their particular protection, and which ordered guards to be placed on Mrs. Hamilton and her daughter*. And
 actuated

* The only alternative for Mrs. Hamilton, was to find bail for 50,000 livres, or to remain a prisoner in her own apartments; but no alternative was allowed Mrs. Beresford. M. de Limon offered himself as bail for Mrs. Hamilton ;

actuated by the same motives of justice which had induced them to issue this *arret*, they granted Mr. Beresford an extraordinary audience. Mr. Beresford some days before his imprisonment had protested against the competency of any Court of Judicature in France to judge his pretended crime committed in England, and had appealed from the *decret* of the Chatelet to the supreme Court of Parliament. On this appeal and on the question of his imprisonment the cause proceeded, and Mr. Beresford prayed for damages against Mrs. Hamilton in favour of his infant daughter, and that his wife might be restored to him; or if the Court were not inclined to determine on the validity of his pretensions to her, he prayed that she might be escorted with him under guard to England, where he was ready to submit his claim to the decision of their natural Judges.

M. Target, the eloquent advocate for Mr. Beresford, represented to the Court in the most pathetic manner, the situation of his client in prison, the injustice of his commitment, and the dishonour it reflected to the

Hamilton; but not being able to satisfy the Court that his circumstances were responsible for 50,000 livres, this lady, to her extreme mortification, was obliged to remain *in statu quo*.

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country. He exposed the audacious conduct of the adverse party, who flying from the tribunals of her own country, availed herself of the difference of the laws and prejudices of the two kingdoms, artfully imposing on the French nation, by subjecting an English transaction to French ideas; and under pretence of retrieving the honour of her family, declaring her daughter a concubine and her grandchild a bastard. /

M. de Bonnières, the Counsel for Mrs. Hamilton, who pleaded at the first hearing, being convinced by the arguments of his learned opponent of the weakness of his client's cause, and how greatly she had imposed upon him, declined proceeding any further, and threw up his brief. M. Gerbier, celebrated more for his eloquence than his integrity, whom Mrs. Hamilton had likewise retained, being * indisposed, this lady, much to the honour of the French Bar, could not prevail on any advocate of reputation to undertake her desperate cause. M. de Limon was therefore obliged to stand forth and exhibit a calumnious pleading of his own composition; and he had the mortification to be hissed by

* When M. Gerbier, who never refuses a brief, is engaged in a bad cause 'tis well known in Paris, that, after receiving his fee, he is *very apt to fall sick.*

the insulted audience each day on which he displayed his eloquence.

This defamatory brief was published by way of *Memoire* for Mrs. Hamilton; and many thousand copies were distributed in Paris and Versailles. In this libel there is scarcely an assertion but what is either a malicious misrepresentation or an impudent falsehood; and though the ornament of style is not wanting to set off this composition to the best advantage, it requires but an ordinary capacity to discover its weakness and fallacy.

In the course of this publication Mrs. Hamilton is represented as a lady of grave and austere deportment, and Mr. Beresford as insinuating himself into her favour by the extreme sanctity of his demeanour, and by his edifying and affecting sermons. Here the reader who knows the parties must smile, as Mr. Beresford's deportment is not very sanctified, and Mrs. Hamilton never goes to church. Her daughter, too, is represented as a novice, not even suspecting there was the least relation between the two sexes. Mrs. Hamilton then had given herself much unnecessary trouble for two years previous to her daughter's marriage, for she was ever dreading and guarding against elopements. And a disappointed scheme of a young Irish Counsellor in

the year 1779, shews that her apprehensions were not ill founded. Page 24. of this work exhibits a prediction made eighteen months before its completion; that the cruel guards which the Parliament should one day place about Mrs. Hamilton and her daughter should desire to sleep in their chamber. Then M. de Limon, p. 44. puts a fine speech in the mouth of Mrs. Hamilton, addressed to her daughter when she sent her abroad. And in this oration, pronounced the 10th of January, 1781, the Dauphin, who was to eternize the glory and the empire of his grandfathers, is apostrophized. What a spirit of prescience inspired Mrs. Hamilton's tongue! Lo! on the 20th of the succeeding October, a Dauphin was born!

But Mrs. Hamilton seems better versed in the Book of Fate than in more ordinary matters. She asserts in this curious performance, that the Archbishop of Canterbury has an unlimited power to bastardize or legitimate children; and that, at all events, the King of England, at whose royal feet she meant to prostrate herself, would, in consideration of the services of her illustrious family, be graciously pleased to legitimate her grandchild.

The tenour of these pleadings was to inflict the penalty of French laws on Mr. Beresford for an action committed in England, and to declare

his

his marriage null. In the course of this suit, Mrs. Hamilton, forgetting the obscurity of her own father's origin, made the most false and illiberal representation of Mr. Beresford's family; she added several years to her son-in-law's age, and took away considerably from her daughter's; and during the whole affair, she used calumny instead of argument, and exhibited mere assertions for legal proof.

Mr. Beresford having suffered during a whole month all the horrors of a French prison, found his health much impaired. He was induced to ask for his liberty, and it was immediately granted him.

M. Elie de Beaumont published a *Memoire* for his client, replete with sound learning, clothed in elegant diction. Mons. de la Cretelle, the advocate for Mr. Beresford's child, composed an excellent *Memoire* in favour of his infant client; and Mons. Tronson de Coudray pleaded in its behalf with the fullest success.

The singularity and importance of this cause excited the attention of the public, and it became the topic of general conversation. The beauty of the child, and the peculiarity of its situation, softened the hearts, and secured the favour of people of every description, and occasioned the severest reflections on the insensibility and barbarity of its mother, who had now learnt to abandon it without remorse.

M. de

M. de Bonnières, wearied at length by Mrs. Hamilton's importunity, was prevailed upon to resume, on the last day, the ungrateful task of opposing M. Target and truth. His efforts to support a scandalous persecution failed, and afforded a striking proof of the insufficiency of superior abilities when prostituted to a bad purpose.

The suit depending before the Parliament of Douay had been removed, by letters patent, to Paris, to be judged at the same time with Mr. Beresford's appeal from the Chatelet, and the question of his false imprisonment.

At length, when the merits of both parties had been maturely considered, and M. d'Aguesseau, the *Avocat General*, had, in a masterly charge, discussed all the circumstances, explained the great principle of the law of nations, and exposed to public indignation the agents of intrigue which had supported Mrs. Hamilton, the Parliament repaired the late violation of this sacred law, in condemning Mrs. Hamilton in 50,000 livres damages, in favour of her granddaughter, with all costs of suit, and Mrs. Beresford to be escorted, under guard, with her husband to England*.

The

* *Arrest de la cour de Parlement, qui déclare nules, injurieux, vexatoires, attentatoires au droit des gens, le décret de prise*
de

The justice of Mr. Beresford's cause, the injuries he had suffered, and his unshaken assiduity to regain a wife, whom, even yet, he had not learnt to consider with indifference, had influenced the public in his favour; and the *arret* was universally applauded.

Mrs. Hamilton, unawed by conscience, and unsubdued by shame, again had recourse to intrigue. Encouraged by her success in obtaining Mr. Beresford's imprisonment, and assisted by her formidable cabal, she now boldly attempted to impose on Royalty itself. The ladies of rank, whom her supposed alliance with the Duke of Hamilton had interested in her behalf, had not been idle at Versailles; a court where female influence has long given the law. They had gained Monsr. Amelot and the Garde des Sceaux, agents proper to forward Mrs. Hamilton's buff-

de corps contre le sieur Beresford, Anglois, & son emprisonnement; condamne la dame Hamilton en 50,000 livres de dommages & intérêts applicables à l'enfant de la dame Beresford sa fille; renvoie en Angleterre les sieur & dame Beresford pour procéder sur la demande en revendication du mari, & sur la demande de la femme en nullité de mariage, à l'effet de quoi les parties se retireront pardevant le Roi pour obtenir toutes lettres nécessaires; condamne la dame Hamilton en tous les dépens; ordonne que le présent Arrêt sera imprimé & affiché.

Du 25 Mars 1782.

Louis, par la grace de Dieu, Roi de France & de Navarre: Au premier huissier de notre cour de Parlement, &c. &c.

nefs,

ness, the one being as deficient in understanding as the other in integrity, and equally anxious to strengthen their declining interest at Versailles, by favouring any scheme proposed to them by the ladies of the court. The reader has seen that M. de Vergennes had been gained before.

The operations of this party were carried on with the utmost secrecy. New falsehoods were invented, which Mr. Beresford not suspecting, could neither oppose or contradict.

The King's extreme aversion to business, and his reliance on his courtiers, will in some measure account for an act of despotism, which will for ever disgrace the annals of his country. He was induced by this powerful party to annul the decree of his Parliament, and to take under his protection two fugitives, exiled by the laws of their own country, and solemnly condemned by the laws of France.

The city of Paris considered the annulling of the *arret* with silent horror. The Parliament, indeed, exhibited the most undaunted resolution in defence of their just rights. The several Chambers immediately assembled, and they unanimously resolved to remonstrate to the King on the injustice of his annulling their decree, praying him to suffer their penalty against Mrs. Hamilton, in favour of her persecuted grandchild, to take place. The Whitsuntide vacation

vacation suspended, for a while, their proceedings, but after the recess, the remonstrance will be carried to Versailles.

Mr. Beresford apprehending the danger to which his child was exposed, since the King had deprived it of the Parliament's protection, conveyed her out of the French dominions, and safely conducted her to his own country.

The different parliaments of France, together with the public in general, are now anxiously waiting the result of this spirited opposition to the unconstitutional exercise of regal power; and which must determine how far the people may confide in their laws. But whatever may be the result, a solemn hearing of eleven days, during a period of seven weeks, before the highest court of judicature in the kingdom, must be considered by Englishmen as the most complete idea of national justice, not to be overturned by an act of despotism, more becoming the Divan of Constantinople than the cabinet of Versailles.

F I N I S.

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